DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

MARCH 1941

DOCUMENTARY—THE CREATIVE INTERPRETATION OF REALITY

VOL 2 No 3 PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY FILM CENTRE 34 SOHO SQUARE LONDON W1 FOURPENCE

41 NOTES OF THE MONTH
43 PROPAGANDA PLAN—1918
45 PROPAGANDA POSTSCRIPT—1941
47 NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS
48 "FIRE WATCHER'S"
49 MASS OBSERVATION
50 TRAGEDY IN TWO SCENES
54 RELIGION AND THE SCREEN
55 CHAPLIN'S SPEECH
57 FILM SOCIETY NEWS
58 FILM LIBRARIES

Films Commission?

WHILE THE British film industry is rapidly falling into a decline, the Board of Trade has produced a plan for regenerating the industry. Some plan or some constructive proposals for the revival of the industry were obviously needed three years ago; now the mountain has laboured and produced a rather insignificant mouse. The proposal is to set up a films commission, consisting of Sir Frederick Whyte, the Chairman of the present Cinematograph Films Council, Simon Rowson, the Board of Trade's adviser on film matters, and E. Palache, adviser on film finance to the Films Council.

The proposal has met with unanimous opposition from the exhibitors and from the renters. There was a certain measure of support from the producers. The exhibitors and renters feel offended that they were not consulted in the constitution, or even in the question of the desirability of such a commission. The producers feel that probably their only hope lies in some form of co-ordinating committee that can regulate an industry living by catch-as-catch-can methods, and also feel that the interests of the British production industry could be better served by the detached viewpoint of a commission. In general principle the idea of a films commission is sound, as it was in the days when the Lord Moyne Committee approved it some years ago. The present Cinematograph Films Council is far too unwieldy a body and represents too many interests to arrive at conclusive decisions. The idea of a substitute films commission composed of three or four people with advisory sub-committees, is much more likely to work quickly and efficiently. We doubt, however, whether the names suggested are the strongest available. The committee would at least need a

chairman of imagination and a figure big enough to achieve material results. In this list of suggested names, we see yet again that the Board of Trade's belief in the importance of the film industry is slight.

Studio Space

AMERICAN producers complain that there is a shortage of studio space. Therefore, they cannot meet their quota obligations. That there is a shortage of studio space is undeniable. In fact, were any means to be found of reviving the production of British feature films, it is doubtful whether there would be enough studio space to accommodate even 50 per cent of pre-war schedules. If the Board of Trade is serious in its desire to protect the British film industry and if the Ministry of Information is equally desirous of bending the film industry of this country to propaganda needs, they should take heed of this problem.

Army Training Films

IT WOULD be interesting to know if the Army Technical Film Unit has yet been investigated by anyone in a position to assess its merits? It appears that its latest activity has been to order a feature-length training film from Ealing Studios. This must be costing at least £10,000 on the lowest possible commercial rates, and Wardour Street rumours freely suggest a figure in the neighbourhood of £30,000. This means that the film is costing as much as anything from 15 to 30 short training films. Is such a luxury justified? And is there anyone in the Army Technical Film Unit capable of controlling its production? It would also be interesting to know whether studios other than Ealing were approached or invited to quote for production, and whether any members of the Army Technical Film Unit were previously connected with Ealing Studios in a professional capacity? We should also like to know whether officers of the Treasury are in control of expenditure, as in the case, for example, of a Ministry of Information film; or whether the Technical Film Unit has complete financial control over the considerable financial commitments involved in a feature production?

Threat to Non-Theatricals?

CERTAIN SIGNS and portents have recently suggested that we may be about to face a shortage of 16 mm. printing-stock. If this is so, it is essential that a sensibly conceived rationing system be put into operation early rather than late. The Central Film Library, in which the M.O.I. has combined the Empire and G.P.O. libraries with its own non-theatricals; the Petroleum Films Bureau; the British Commercial Gas Association; the foreign circulation of Shell; the G.B.E. library, with its collection of biological subjects—these are examples of the social and educational services which would most obviously suffer from an inability to obtain a sufficient number of prints for adequate circulation. In addition to this, the use of film for training purposes by the Services (notably the R.A.F.) depends largely on 16 mm. copies. But the Services would no doubt get priority on printing orders—thus leaving the wider (and more forward-looking) non-theatrical field short of product. If this happened, the rationing system would inevitably have to be based on a consideration of the merit of each film in respect to values of propaganda, prestige, and general education. Arbitrary though this might sound, it seems to be the only method of ensuring that the sociological use of the film—never more vital than at present—should be maintained at maximum possible strength, even if (disastrously) it cannot be increased.

Imperial Institute

SIR HARRY LINDSAY'S annual report is as encouraging as ever, and makes it clear that the Imperial Institute is as active as ever. Much enterprise has been shown in coping with war conditions. The Galleries, for instance, have had to be closed; but, as Sir Harry puts it, "as schools can no longer visit our galleries, we must . . . make the lessons of our galleries available to the schools." The dioramas and "story" exhibits are therefore being used as the basis for pictorial charts which will be available to schools. Again, the closing of the cinema cut out the weekly Empire lecture, but a panel of one hundred lecturers has been organised to go to the schools. From many points of view, however, the choice of the Institute as the Headquarters of the M.O.I.'s Central Film Library is the most important happening of the year. By mid-December last the Ministry had placed 1,200 16 mm. copies and 150 35 mm. copies in the Institute's library; and this is on top of the fact that the Empire and G.P.O. Libraries had increased their distribution from 37,000 issues in 1939 to over 40,000 in 1940. Sir Harry's circulation figures for 1941 will be awaited with great interest. Meantime, he and his staff may be sincerely congratulated on their work.

The News Bulletins

THERE SEEMS to be a certain amount of public dissatisfaction at the B.B.C.'s news bulletins—a dissatisfaction which is rather unfairly rationalised into complaints about the announcers. Whatever the merits or demerits of this or that announcer, it must be remembered that his job is to read what is put before him, which is, often enough, an official communiqué. The result is a monotonous sameness about every bulletin. The press, in general, has the same defects, but a newspaper reader can skip, or can take in the main message at a glance; aurally it is not so easy. What is needed is a more imaginative approach to the preparation of the bulletins; and with this the announcers would probably be the first to agree. It is possible that the trouble lies at the Ministry of Information end of the B.B.C. One gets the impression that this is in the hands of an unimaginative administrator instead of an imaginative journalist. There is a fantastic story going the rounds that the news of the fall of Bardia, which was releasable in the afternoon, was held up by someone at the Ministry of Information until the midnight news, instead of being released at six and again at nine, when the majority of people are listening. Even if this story is only half true, staff changes are clearly needed.

PROPAGANDA PLAN—1918

In giving permission to reprint his famous propaganda Memorandum to Lord Northcliffe, Mr. H. G. Wells writes: "You must make it clear that this memorandum was published in 1918, that it was written in collaboration with Dr. Headlam Morley, that it is reprinted in 'The Commonsense of War and Peace' (a Penguin Special), and that my present views, as that pamphlet shows, are now considerably wider and deeper than those expressed here." The memorandum is given here in abridged form, by permission of Mr. Wells and Messrs. Penguin Books Ltd.

Preface

HITHERTO ALLIED POLICY and Allied war aims have been defined too loosely to be comprehensible to the Germans.

The real war aim of the Allies is not only to beat the enemy, but to establish a world peace that shall preclude the resumption of war. Successful propaganda in Germany presupposes the clear definition of the kind of world-settlement which the Allies are determined to secure, and the place of Germany in it.

It follows that one of the first requisites is to study and to lay down the lines of a practical League of Free Nations. The present alliance must be taken as the nucleus of any such League. Its control of raw materials of shipping, and its power to exclude for an indefinite period enemy or even neutral peoples until they subscribe to and give pledges of their acceptance of its principles should be emphasised. It should be pointed out that nothing stands between enemy peoples and a lasting peace except the predatory designs of their ruling dynasties and military and economic castes; that the design of the Allies is not to crush any people, but to assure the freedom of all on a basis of self-determination to be exercised under definite guarantees of justice and fair play; that, unless enemy peoples accept the Allied conception of a world peace settlement, it will be impossible for them to repair the havoc of the present war, to avert utter financial ruin, and to save themselves from prolonged misery; and that the longer the struggle lasts the deeper will become the hatred of everything German in the non-German world, and the heavier the social and economic handicap under which the enemy peoples will labour, even after their admission into a League of Nations."

Memorandum

It has become manifest that for the purposes of an efficient pro-Ally propaganda in neutral and enemy countries a clear and full statement of the war aims of the Allies is vitally necessary. What is wanted is something in the nature of an authoritative text to which propagandists may refer with confidence and which can be made the standard of their activities. It is not sufficient to recount the sins of Germany and to assert that the defeat of Germany is the Allied war aim. What all the world desires to know is what is to happen *after* the war. The real war aim of a belligerent, it is more and more understood, is not merely victory, but a peace of a certain character which that belligerent desires shall arise out of that victory. What, therefore, is the peace sought by the Allies?

It would be superfluous even to summarise here the primary case of the Allies, that the war is on their part a war to resist the military aggression of Germany. It is a war against belligerence, against aggressive war, and the preparation for aggressive war. Such it was in its beginning, and such it remains. But it would be idle to pretend that the ideas of the Governments and peoples allied against Germany have not developed very greatly during the years of the war. There has been a deepening realisation of the danger to mankind of existing political divisions and separations, a great experience in the suffering, destruction, and waste of war; a quickening of consciences against conquests, annexations, and subjugations; and a general clearing up of ideas that have hitherto stood in the way of an organised world peace. While German Imperialism, to judge by the utterances of its accredited heads, and by the behaviour of Germany in the temporarily disorganised States on her Eastern Front, is still as truculent, aggressive, and treacherous as ever, the mind of her antagonists has learnt and has matured. There has arisen in the great world outside the inner lives of the Central Powers a will that grows to gigantic proportions, that altogether overshadows the boasted *will to power* of the German junker and exploiter, *the will to a world peace*. It is like the will of an experienced man set against the will of an obstinate and selfish youth. The war aims of the anti-German Allies take more and more definitely the form of a world of States leagued together to maintain a common law, to submit their mutual differences to a conclusive tribunal, to protect weak communities, to restrain and suppress war threats and war preparations throughout the earth.

Steadfastly the great peoples of the world outside the shadow of German Imperial domination have been working their way to unanimity, while the ruling intelligences of Germany have been scheming for the base advantages of conquest. The thought of the world crystallises now about a phrase, the phrase, 'The League of Free Nations.' The war aims of the Allies become more and more explicitly associated with the spirit and implications of that.

Like all such phrases, 'The League of Free Nations' is subject to a great variety of detailed interpretation, but its broad intentions can now be stated without much risk of dissent. The ideal would, of course, include all the nations of the earth, including a Germany purged of her military aggressiveness; it involves some sort of INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS that can revise, codify, amend and extend international law, a supreme Court of Law in which States may sue and be sued, and whose decision the League will be pledged to enforce, and the supervision, limitation, and use of armaments under the direction

of the international congress. It is also felt very widely that such a congress must set a restraint upon competitive and unsanctioned 'expansionist' movements into unsettled and disordered regions; must act as the guardian of feeble races and communities, and must be empowered to make conclusive decisions upon questions of transport, tariffs, access to raw material, migration, and international intercourse generally. The constitution of this congress remains indefinite; it is the crucial matter upon which the best thought of the world is working at the present time. But given the prospect of a suitable congress there can be little dispute that the great Imperial Powers among the Allies are now prepared for great and generous limitations of their sovereignty in the matter of armaments, of tropical possessions and of subject peoples, in the common interest of mankind. The spectacle of German Imperialism, boastful, selfish, narrow, and altogether hateful, in its terrible blood-dance through Europe, has been an object-lesson to humanity against excesses of national vanity and national egotism and against Imperial pride.

But this question of the constitution of a world Congress is not to be solved by making a coarse classification of States into large and war-capable Powers, and small and weak Powers. Take the case of Italy, for example: though she is almost incapable of sustaining a war against the world by herself because of her weakness in the matter of coal, she can as an ally be at once of enormous importance. Take the case of Spain again, a very similar case. And whatever the war ability of Latin-America may be to-day, there can be no question that this great constellation of States must count very heavily in the framing of the world of to-morrow. Then, again, we have to consider the vast future possibilities of the Chinese Republic, with coal, steel, and a magnificent industrial population, and the probable reconstruction of Eastern Europe and a renascence of Russia which may give the world a loose-knit but collectively-important Slavonic confederation. While an isolated small Power within the orbit of attraction of a large Power, a State of 5,000,000 people or less, must always remain a difficult problem in the world representation, it is clear that something like an adequate representation of small and weak Powers becomes possible so soon as they develop a disposition towards aggregation, for the purposes of world politics, into associations with States racially, linguistically, and historically akin to them. The trend of Allied opinion is to place not Peru or Ukrainia, nor Norway, nor Finland on a level with the United States of America or the British Empire at the League of Nations Congress, but to prepare the way for adequate representation through a preliminary Latin-American or a Slavonic or a Scandinavian Confederation, which could speak with a common idea at the World Congress.

It has to be recognised that the institution of a League of Nations precludes any annexations or any military interference with any peoples whatever, without a mandate from the Congress of the League. The League must directly or indirectly become the guardian of all unsettled regions and order must be kept, and development promoted by it in such derelict regions as Mesopotamia and Armenia, for example, have now become. In these latter instances it is open to consideration whether the League should operate through some single Power acting as a mandatory of the League, or else by international forces under the control of the League as a whole. Theoretically the latter course is to be preferred, but there are enormous practical advantages in many cases to be urged for the former. The Allies have indeed had a considerable experience during the war of joint controls and joint expeditions; there has been a great education in internationalism since August, 1914; but nevertheless the end of the war is likely to come long before any real international forces have been evolved. It is, however, towards the ultimate use of international forces in such cases that the joint policy of the Allies is plainly and openly directed.

It is, however, of far less importance in the war aims of the Allies that this and that particular scrap of territory should change hands from the control of one group of combatants to that of the other, than that the present practical ascendency of German Imperialism over the resources of the Polish, Russian, Ukrainian, Czech, Jugo-Slav, Finnish, and Rumanian peoples should cease.

Exact territorial definition does not appear to the Allies to be of nearly such importance as the establishment of a common system of disarmament and a common effort to restore the ravages of the war. The full effect of the war is still not realised by the mass of the belligerent peoples, more especially in America and Western Europe, where life is still fairly comfortable. There has already been a destruction not merely of the political, but of the social order over great areas of the world, especially in Eastern Europe, and it is doubtful whether any peace can restore these disorganised areas to anything like their former productivity for many years. A universal shortage not merely of man-power, but of transport and machinery available for the purposes of peace cannot be avoided. It is doubtful, moreover, if social discipline in the ports of the British Empire and America will be strong enough to restrain an organised resistance to the use of German shipping after the war for any purpose and to the use of Allied shipping for the transport of goods to and from Germany on the part of Allied and neutral seamen and transport workers indignant at the U-boat campaign; moreover, there is a world-wide cry for a vindictive trade after the war against Germany, and for organised boycotts that may further restrict the process of economic world recovery. It is doubtful if the menace of these 'revenge' movements and the difficulty of controlling them in democratic States is properly appreciated in Germany. The militarist Government of Germany, fighting now for bare existence, is concealing from its people this world-wide disposition to boycott German trade and industry at any cost to the boycotting populations, and buoying them up with preposterous hopes of 'business as usual' as soon as peace is made. The fact has to be faced that while the present German Government remains no such economic resumption is possible. The 'War after the War' possibility has to be added to the economic destruction in Russia, Belgium and elsewhere, in any estimate of the situation after the war.

The plain prospect of material disorganisation thus opened should alone suffice to establish the absolute necessity for peace now of such a nature as will permit a world-wide concentration upon reconstruction, in good faith and without any complications of enmity and hostility. But in addition to the

material destruction and dislocation, and to the 'hatred' disorganisation already noted, the financial transactions of the last few years have created a monetary inflation which, *without the concerted action of all the Powers*, may mean a collapse of world credit. Add now the plain necessity for continued armament if a real League of Nations is not attained. Without any exaggeration the prospect of the nations facing these economic difficulties in an atmosphere of continuing hostility, intrigue, and conflict, under a continuing weight of armaments, and with a continuing distrust, is a hopeless one. The consequences stare us in the face; Russia is only the first instance of what must happen generally. The alternative to a real League of Nations is the steady descent of our civilisation towards a condition of political and social fragmentation such as the world has not seen since the fall of the Roman Empire. The honest co-operation of Germany in the League of Nations, in disarmament, and in world reconstruction is, therefore, fundamentally necessary. There is now no other rational policy. And since it is impossible to hope for any such help or co-operation from the Germany of the Belgian outrage, the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, the betrayal of Ukrainia, THE CHANGING OF GERMANY becomes a primary war aim, *the* primary war aim for the Allies. How Germany is to be changed is a complex question. The word *Revolution* is, perhaps, to be deprecated. We do not, for instance, desire a Bolshevik breakdown in Germany, which would make her economically useless to mankind. We look, therefore, not so much to the German peasant and labourer as to the ordinary, fairly well-educated mediocre German for co-operation in the reinstatement of civilisation. Change there *must* be in Germany; in the spirit in which the Government is conducted, in the persons who exercise the control, and in the relative influence of different classes in the country. The sharpest distinction, therefore, has to be drawn between Germany and its present Government in all our propaganda and public utterances; and a constant appeal has to be made by the statesmen of the Alliance, and by a frank and open propaganda through the Germans of the United States of America and of Switzerland, through neutral countries and by every possible means, from Germany Junker to Germany sober. We may be inclined to believe that every German is something of a Junker; we have to remember he is also potentially a reasonable man.

And meanwhile, the Allies must continue with haste and diligence to fight and defeat Junker Germany, which cannot possibly conquer, but which may nevertheless succeed in ruining the world. They must fight the German armies upon the fronts, they must fight an unregenerate Germany economically and politically, and they must bring home to the German reason and conscience at home, by an intensive air war and by propaganda alike, the real impossibility of these conceptions of national pride and aggressiveness in which the German population has been bred.

PROPAGANDA POSTSCRIPT—1941

Wells's Memorandum is yet another example of his astonishing foresight. Its basic object is the formulation of a propaganda campaign to destroy enemy morale; and it will be remembered that Northcliffe's organisation at Crewe House is thought by many to have been a major factor in the German collapse of 1918. For this alone, Mr. Wells's twenty-three-year-old analysis is of great contemporary interest. But it goes further than that. In it Wells, with a prophetic insight similar to that which he showed in the earlier reels of *Things to Come*, paints an unpleasant picture of a post-war world which does not base its peace settlements on international justice and national reform. Noteworthy, too, in this Memorandum—and in several of Northcliffe's—is the stress laid on the necessity for planning and co-ordination. Propaganda cannot achieve more than a flash-in-the-pan effect if the propagandists have no basic policy laid down for them; and the strength of Northcliffe's organisation lay largely in the fact that its terms of reference were constantly laid down or confirmed by the Cabinet. This, with the addition of a determined effort to formulate something more than a "beat-the-Germans" basis of war aims, was the reason why our propaganda was so successful in enemy countries. To-day we seem no further—if as far—as we were in 1918. Yet in radio and film we have weapons which were not in Northcliffe's armoury. We are using both weapons—on a fairly large scale—but it is open to question whether we are using them effectively. Furthermore, our task in this war is much greater, for not only are the enemy in possession of a powerful and world-wide propaganda system, but also our own propaganda front stretches far beyond enemy territories alone. We have to deal with enemy-occupied countries, with non-belligerents (especially the U.S.A.), with the Dominions, the Colonial Empire, and the Home Front. For each of these there are several and separate propaganda lines, but behind the whole propaganda effort there should be a co-ordinated plan. At present there is no sign of any such plan. In the realm of films we note the increasing productiveness of the Films Division of the Ministry of Information. But at the same time we question whether the piecemeal and often confused approach to subject matter and to circulation justifies more than minor claims to efficiency. The issue cannot be avoided by pointing to spectacular theatrical successes in the U.S.A. As long as there is no evidence of an inter-Imperial film drive; as long as the Ministry of Information film policy remains rooted in short-term interests; and as long as the Ministry of Information is working without a basic policy; then we must beg leave to doubt the efficiency of our film propaganda. It is not the Film Division's job to formulate policy, but to interpret policy. But it *is* its job to see that it gets a policy to work on. And, by the same token, both policy and production must be on a long-term basis, and as Wells pointed out in 1918, must on no account stop short at the war.

FILMS OF GREAT BRITAIN LTD.

PUTNEY 6274 : 347a UPPER RICHMOND ROAD, LONDON, S.W.15

ALWAYS UP-TO-THE-MINUTE

An Entirely New Feature dealing exhaustively with *Documentary Films* will be incorporated in the 1941 edition of

The KINE YEAR BOOK

Of course, this new section detailing all the salient information connected with Documentary Films is additional to previous encyclopædic nature of the book, so comprehensive in data regarding this Industry. No matter what you want to know, what you want to buy or sell, you'll find the answer in the Kine Year Book, aptly described as The Red Guide. The ready reference to help every executive, now in its 28th year of publication.

PRICE
20/-
Special price to annual subscribers to the *Kinematograph Weekly*
12/6

ORDER YOUR RED GUIDE NOW

All enquiries to:
KINEMATOGRAPH PUBLICATIONS LTD., 93 LONG ACRE, LONDON, W.C.2

NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS

Our School. Realist Film Unit. *Associate Producer:* Paul Rotha. *Director:* Donald Alexander.

WITH A first-rate clarity this film shows the admirably intelligent system of education enjoyed by the school children of Bampton, in Devon. They learn, not only from books, but also from their surroundings. A history lesson is related to the growth of neighbouring farms and a brief lecture on the expansion of metals is amplified by a study of railway lines and of leaded glass in the church windows.

When war brings evacuees from London, the country children stoutly defend their way of learning in the face of criticism from the town children. And gradually the town children grow used to this new form of schooling: their outlook and their interests broaden as they fit in to the fuller life of the country children.

Unfortunately the film does not deal with the wider aspects of the subject; it never becomes more than a record of the methods of Bampton School. The question of the evacuees is given comparatively little footage and is treated purely on its face value. The opportunity of examining the underlying problems of present-day education has been missed. Whether unavoidable or not, this is a pity.

The commentary is informative and agreeably spoken by the Headmaster. It is supplemented by reports of their work given by the children themselves. In principle this is a good idea; it is, however, not a good choice for this film. Since there are also synchronised dialogue sequences, the use of children's voices over shots of children speaking often gives a mixed impression of dialogue out of synchronism.

The revolutionary step of including a shot of the unit shooting a scene seems to me to strike a wrong note. If one aims at bringing reality to the screen, any reminder of the technical processes by which this is achieved can only destroy that reality for an audience. Unless, of course, the film in question is on another plane of reality where the camera is a legitimate part of the subject of the film—and on that plane, as Dziga Vertov discovered, life is very difficult.

Canteen on Wheels. Verity Films. *Associate Producer:* Basil Wright. *Director:* J. Gardner Lewis.

METHODICALLY and steadily Documentary is building up a record of life under war-time conditions. The planned series of subjects issuing from the Ministry of Information Films Division and other official sources should in time ensure an imaginative coverage complete enough to prove of inestimable value to the present and future.

Canteen on Wheels is a first-rate contribution to this series. Every night, blitz or no blitz, Y.M.C.A. mobile canteens, staffed by volunteers, are out on the streets bringing refreshments to A.R.P. workers, to fire-fighters and to shelterers. Most dramatically the film builds up its record of tireless service. In the midst of a devastating raid, with bombs dropping all around and gun flashes lighting up tired faces, two women—one tough, seasoned, experienced, the other young, new to the job—drive their canteen from street to street, always ready to hand out cups of hot tea, or to post letters or do any other little job that comes along.

No commentary is used, and none needed. Pictorially the film tells its own story, aided by crisp, realistic dialogue and a carefully prepared effects track. Bernard Browne's camera work is nicely keyed to the atmosphere and the characters, especially a Mrs. Holly, thoroughly convincing.

While politicians declaim, it is films like these that help bring people together and show that an ounce of service is worth a ton of speeches.

Telefootlers. *Production:* Verity Films for the Ministry of Information.

NO ONE has yet found a completely satisfactory formula for the Five-Minute film. The great problem is to get the story told in such a short footage. It is remarkable, therefore, to find that *Telefootlers* begins with a sequence of small talk between two telephone operators which gives no indication whatsoever of the ultimate purpose of the film and is, in fact, irrelevant. The film then puts itself under a further handicap by using the remaining footage to tell not one story, but two. It seeks to show the inconvenience and actual danger caused by wasteful use of the telephone and also tackles the separate evil of careless telephone talk which may result in valuable information leaking to the enemy. In style the film carries us back to the bad old days of the "anti-gossip" series. It is one of those films which lead the public to the comforting conclusion that the war is taking place in the film studios and has nothing to do with real life. It is also encouraging to learn that the methods of German spies have not improved since their early screen appearances in 1939. They still have to push costermongers' barrows around the streets in the hope that one of their customers will be overheard revealing the position of His Majesty's ships over the telephone. As a method it still seems rather uncertain.

Northern Outpost. *Production:* Army Film Unit.

THIS IS Major Macdonald's second venture into the short field. The film was shot before he took over the Army Film Unit, and so he will have to be absolved from any responsibility for the mute. It looks very much as if the War Office sent someone, and I shouldn't think it was a proper camera man, to Iceland, and told him to "get what he could."

The quality of the photography is bad, there are numerous negative scratches, and the material is just a collection of dull shots. Apparently no attempt has been made to shoot a sequence. Soldiers are treated as just a lot of "units" which "go there", and "come here". The only place where the film comes alive is at a football match—between the Iceland children and soldiers.

Why when many of the film industry's best technicians are digging trenches in the Forces the War Office makes a film like this I don't know. It is edited efficiently and the commentary does its best to liven up the dull pictures, but that is all.

Labour and Defense, U.S.A. *Production:* March of Time. (No. 11. Sixth Year.) *Distribution:* R.K.O., Radio Pictures.

THIS latest issue of March of Time tells the story of the U.S. labour front, from the beginnings of organised labour to the defence programme of to-day. It moves rapidly through the various stages of this great struggle—from interesting glimpses of the early labour leaders like Sam Gompers and Eugene V. Debs—through the rough stuff of the professional strike breakers—the growth of the two major Unions, the American Federation of Labour, and its rival, the Congress of Industrial Organisations—to the present-day strikes and union battles.

There are 9,000,000 union members in the U.S.A., says the commentator. Somehow we never quite get a mental picture of the men of this enormous army, either collectively or individually. Only once do we hear from the workers themselves—in a get-together discussion between the leaders of the workers and the manager of a factory, on the questions of certain raises of salary and whether or not a particular inefficient worker should be sacked. Otherwise our attention is focused upon the fights between the leaders of the two rival Unions. Unfortunately, the differences between these two, the A.F.L. and the C.I.O., are never made quite clear. This tends to make these battles rather pointless and the speeches are just a series of rude remarks and retorts. ("They lie in their bowels!"—says John L. Lewis, leader of the C.I.O.). Surely the only approach to the subject of American labour is from the angle of the workers themselves.

The film passes over the 1940 situation far too quickly. Now that American aid for Britain is vital we appreciate the fact that the U.S.A. labour front must become a united whole. But we are chiefly interested in being shown exactly what are the causes of the strikes of 1940 which are holding up the delivery of tanks and aeroplanes to this country. That is the real story of *Labour and Defense, U.S.A.*

Only in two sequences does the film reach March of Time's prize-winning standards. In the

slump sequence of 1933—the empty factories up for sale—the deserted yards and the breadline. And again the turmoil of the strikes—the meetings of the unions cross-cut with the window smashing and stone throwing of the street battles. In fact, it is the newsreel shots of the strikes that provide the real highspots. One stands out in particular—a group of tough strike breakers moving slowly into battle, accompanied by the whistles and catcalls of the strikers.

This is England. (Version for Britain, *The Heart of Britain*). *Production:* Crown Film Unit. *Direction:* Humphrey Jennings. *Commentary:* Ed. Murrow.

This is England is a follow up of *London Can Take It* and *Christmas Under Fire*, intended for the States. It is a film about raids in the industrial midlands, the damage and its effect on people. Jennings, like the other mass-observation lads, is obviously very fond of the Midlands and the North, an affection which is quite understandable. Here are good, tough, simple and unsophisticated people and while the film stays with a fire-watcher explaining his job with great intimacy, a Coventry W.V.S. official making a case for the old cuppertea, and, best of all, Lancashire mill girls in their shelter playing a magnificent team race-game with balloons (which they have to finish by sitting on and busting), it is completely moving and successful. Unfortunately the film is not content to let them state their own case. Even Americans must be tired by now of pictures of raid damage, sparing us nothing, not even the ruined churches with crucifixes gaunt against the sky and the usual defensive commentary. Over the mill-girls—"Do they look cowed?"; over the Hallé orchestra playing Beethoven's fifth—"These people still appreciate the real greatness of Germany"; over the Leeds choral society singing the "Hallelujah" chorus—"Look at these faces". Not even Americans, surely, need all this bullying and special pleading; the people are quite strong enough to stand on their own feet, they don't need any explaining. The point of this commentary can only be to try to make the people carry some outside message which isn't really part of them. And when we come to the bombers taking off and the piece about these people hitting back, we begin to suspect that the message at the end of the film has not the same breadth as the message in the earlier sequences.

Shell Cinemagazine No. 6. *Production:* Shell Film Unit. *Editing:* Nielson Baxter. *Distribution:* Non-theatrical, available on 35 mm. and 16 mm.

THREE ITEMS are included in the latest issue of the Shell Cinemagazine. The first shows some of the operations in a glass factory where much of the work is still done by hand and mouth. The ancient craft of glass-blowing never loses its fascination. The second item contrasts old and new methods of harvesting in English wheat-fields. The efficiency of the modern combine harvester is well demonstrated. The last and best of the three items shows the work of a blacksmith in a Somerset village. Peter Baylis has turned in a nicely directed sequence showing quite simply how a horse gets a new shoe. It is pleasant to see an industry that remains completely unmechanised and the blacksmith talks about his work in an easy and pleasing Somerset voice.

The whole reel has a remoteness from the war-strained atmosphere of life to-day and should find favour with any type of audience.

Out of the Night. *Production:* Realist Film Unit. *Direction:* Max Anderson. *Photography:* Erwin Hillier. *Commentary:* Albert Pearl.

BLINDNESS is a horrifying subject for a film. It is bad enough when a blind person is briefly introduced into a fiction film for sentimental reasons or to point a tragedy. Even then most of us cannot bear to see the disability emphasised. Yet *Out of the Night* is designed to show the handicaps which the blind must suffer during every waking hour, and this film, so far from being horrifying, is a beautiful and an inspiring piece of work. The sensitivity of Max Anderson's direction and the remarkably appropriate lighting of Erwin Hillier (the blind eyes always in shadow) have made a memorable film. It is inspiring because of the story it tells of the remarkable work which is being done in this country for the care and training of the blind. But the film does not leave us merely with a feeling of pride in what Britain is doing for blind people—it inspires us also with pride in these fellow human beings whom we see pursuing with deft assured movements the special skills which they have substituted for their lost sight. Congratulations to the British Council on sponsoring this film.

"FIRE WATCHER'S"

This is a film scenario by a boy of fourteen which we publish exactly as it was received. We suspect that the M.O.I. has received many scenarios which do not reach this standard.

An Unsal scene was taking place in the Brown's home, it was an argument over the question of "fire watching." Mr. Brown was an obstinate man, he would not do anything for his country, at least, that is what he said.

Mr. and Mrs. Brown lived in Central Avenue, beside's them, twenty other people lived up the avenue, the rest had been evacutated.

Since the New Fire Watching Order, came in to force, a fire-party had been formed up of four men, Mr. Davis, Mr. Watson, MR Whye, & Mr. Sullivan, all were fine, energetic and strong men, but they couldn't watch out every night.

A meeting was called, the following afternoon, which was Saturday. Twelve men turned up, but Mr. Brown had gone to the local picture's; he didn't care about fire watching, or anything connected with it. At the meeting eight new members were enrolled, many new suggestions were made and a rota was written out.

Sunday night was the begining of a new week for the fire watchers. The night was cold, a frosty moon shone above them. Six men were on duty, two at each end of the avenue, and two in the middle. Each was equiped with tin-hats, gas-masks, and all that was neccessary including stirrup-pumps and buckets of sand and water. While all this was going on Mr. Brown was cosely tucked in bed, what's more he didn't care.

It was now half past-ten, the night was still, and quiet, the moon shone brighter than ever.

Mr. Watson and Mr. Davis's turn to watch at one end of the avenue. Mr. Watson was saying, "I don't think they're be any action to-night, Davis." "It's a fine night though," replied Mr. Davis. "Is that Mr. Brown doing any fire-watching?" "No, Mr. Watson," replied Mr. Davis. "He should be. Let's knock him up!" asked Davis.

"No," Watson said, "let the poor man rest; he works hard all-day." "Oh! I forgot that," the other replied the other replied briskly.

Time was dragging slowly on; eleven struck, still nothing occured. But at ten-past the whaling of the familar sirens, startled up Mr. Brown, who was still in bed. "Good Lord! he is here!" Mr. Brown had hardly got the words out of his mouth, when the local gun's open'd fire. This was enough for Mr. Brown, there he was running round the room, trying to find his trousers in the dark. What a to-do!

The enemy aircraft were moaning overhead! Two bombs whizzed down! A shower of Incendary's came down, and a great number fell in Central Ave. The fire-watcher's were on the spot. They had set a number out, great work. "Davis, Brown's house is on fire," said the suprised fire-watchers.

What could they do, it was too big a job for them. "We're have to call the fire-brigade out," and so they did. Mr. Brown was trapped in his house and was shouting for help, but the men could do nothing, their help was uttery useless.

After a few minutes the local fire brigade had arrived. Mr. Brown was rescued, and the blaze was put out.

The morning workers who passed by Mr. Brown's hse learnt a lesson, not to be obstinate.

Mr. Brown joined the fire-party, and another meeting was held, in which Mr. Brown made a wide country appeal which ran—

"People of Britain, do not be obstanite. I have learnt my lesson, and now I am doing my bit. There are many people all over the country like me, but now they know, no matter, what went before them.

Give your services free! Remember it may be your turn next and YOU will be helpless."

Mr. Brown was given a hearty cheer; he was a new Man, he had learn't a lesson, "DONT BE OBSTANITE!"

—Written entirely by Bernard Anstey

MASS OBSERVATION

Tom Harrisson's reply to Buchanan Taylor and Ewart Hodgson concludes this controversy.

The M.O.I. Films Division has had to tackle a vast new and difficult problem, and tackle it with rapidity, using a lot of different people to make the films, people with widely differing views and experience in influencing the mass of the population. The ideas of many of them have previously been orientated in the direction of the appreciative tenth. But their job to-day is mainly to influence the mass of people. An *official* short has no main purpose other than this. It has no box-office check and its "popularity" is no more relevant than the "popularity" of rationing or fire watching or gas mask carrying.

All this seemed to me, two months ago, to sound like commonsense. As I said so, and illustrated my points by the only check-up available to me, that of Mass-Observation, I stressed the tentative nature of suggestions, qualifying and defining the limitations. I specifically said that my data were too scrappy, that this was too big a job for M-O, and that it was the responsibility of interested film groups to establish a separate unit of their own to deal with this matter. My main point was that many contemporary films, excellent though they might be as entertainment or art, sometimes had *effects* not necessarily in the national interest and not designed or expected (or recognised) in the minds of the well-off intelligents responsible for making them. The Select Committee on National Expenditure in its report on the Films Division had already said the same thing, only with much more emphasis and in a much more critical mood.

A blast of angry invective flowed upon me, first from Ewart Hodgson and then from Buchanan Taylor, who went so far as to say the *whole* Film Industry was as good as perfect, and everyone in it knew what the public wanted, could tell you "right away" the popular taste for entertainment in hundreds of towns! This was quite irrelevant. It is not a question of entertainment. The invective amounted to this: not one single criticism was justified; the Films Division was perfect; there was no need for any kind of check-up of the effect of any film; Mass-Observation was wrong. I don't think it's for me to justify M-O. Obviously I think it is all right. The other points *are* important if the documentary and associated type of film is to progress beyond the stage of a minority movement imposed on the majority (because it is given free gratis to the screen) to a stage where it is a really effective and socially essential part of national life now and after the war.

What cynicism for Hodgson to answer my question on whether the Films Division could *prove* that it was not doing more harm than good (I did not mean to imply that it *was* doing more harm than good). "I think" (said Hodgson) "the most pertinent counter to such a question is, can Mr. Harrisson prove that he is in any way qualified to appraise such proof were it forthcoming." It really is of no importance whether or not *I* could appraise the proof. What does matter is that there should be proof and that it should be appraised by disinterested persons. What does matter is that the M.O.I. should check on each stage and see what the effects are.

Have M.O.I. shorts improved—i.e., had more mass effect? Does a film like *Telefootlers* stop people from talking so much on the telephone? The way the gossip theme is handled *could* quite easily have the opposite effect in making people talk more. I am probably wrong, because here I am relying on "instinct." The proof lies in the length of telephone calls as measured by the G.P.O. before and after the release of the film. Anyone, even a mass-observer, could appraise that evidence quite easily. Did the film *Goofer Trouble* make less people look up at 'planes overhead or not? That is an easy thing to measure statistically. Again, it seems to me that the buffooning treatment by Fred Emney and Reginald Purdell *might* have led some people to look up more, in the opposite way to that presumably intended by the film.

Surely, there is no sacrilege in suggesting that this sort of check-up is necessary. Most advertisers conducting campaigns on smaller subjects automatically check-up, even when they have people like Buchanan Taylor with highly developed instincts as their Public Relations Officer. Did *The Heart of Britain* do anything to anybody in Britain. Did *Air Communiqué* make more people confident in the authenticity of R.A.F. communiqués and our system of reporting enemy casualties?

The uses of social research in the cinema are limited. The primary factor must always be the intuition, instinct and genius of sponsors, producers, cameramen, etc. But when they are setting out to make films to help us win the war, I suggest it is part of their duty to use accepted techniques. Firstly to find out the snags and tensions of the problem they intend to film, as they exist in the public mind. Secondly, when the film is made, to check carefully on the effects. Taylor cries a familiar voodoo: I want "to fetter the film industry with a kind of advanced Bedaux system." Bedaux system! To check that the gun you make in the factory is efficient and that when it fires it will go in the right direction. It is really of no interest that the gun looks lovely, or makes people laugh, or satisfies men with "spots of Irish blood." It is a sad thing to find, in a war where the film matters more than ever before, such complete self-satisfaction.

Perhaps Mr. Taylor, who prides himself on this Irish blood, will recall the experiences of an even more important Irishman, Bernard Shaw, who wrote some withering blasts about the intuition of film people and their inability to see that ordinary people could be quite intelligent. Mr. Shaw, the sense of whose views has been proved in terms of show business, said:

> "There are several classes of film, and there are several classes of film directors, including some who are so illiterate that they cannot conceive anyone being interested in anything but very crudely presented plays and divorce court news and adventures out of boys' journals. They usually rank as infallible authorities."

It is a fair axiom. Always distrust an infallible authority who knows it all by instinct.

MUSIC FOR FILMS
SINCE 1910

DIRECTION=COMPOSITION=SOUND TRACK LIBRARY=RECORDS

Some Composers and Collaborators

RONALD BINGE • YORK BOWEN • HUBERT BATH •
BAYNTON POWER • WALTER COLLINS • ALBERT CAZABON •
H. M. FARRAR • JOSEF HOLBROOKE • LOUIS MORDISH •
JOHNNY HEYKENS • HUGO DE GROOT • JOAN FRESCO •
CHARLES ANCLIFFE • KONSTANTINOFF • VICTOR WILLIAMS •
ROBERT STILL • WALTER WARREN • ETC.

DE WOLFE
GERRARD 2992/3
HUDSON RECORD CO.
80/82 WARDOUR ST., LONDON, W1

LICENCES FOR ALL COUNTRIES

DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

MONTHLY FOURPENCE

VOL. 2 NUMBER 3

MARCH 1941

DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER is issued only to private subscribers and continues the policy and purpose of **World Film News** by expressing the documentary idea towards everyday living.

DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER is produced under the auspices of **Film Centre, London,** in association with **American Film Center, New York.**

EDITORIAL BOARD

Edgar Anstey
John Grierson
Donald Taylor
John Taylor
Basil Wright

EDITOR

Ronald Horton

Outside contributions will be welcomed but no fees will be paid.

We are prepared to deliver from 3—50 copies in bulk to Schools, Film Societies and other organisations.

Owned and published by

FILM CENTRE LTD.
34 SOHO SQUARE LONDON
W.1 GERRARD 4253

TRAGEDY IN TWO SCENES

Last June the United States Film Service was officially terminated, and after five years of outstanding success in employing the film as a medium of information and exposition the U.S. Government has reverted to the methods and standards of production which prevailed before the release of the PLOW THAT BROKE THE PLAINS and THE RIVER. We reproduce, with the permission of FILMS, the last act in the dramatic history of the Service.

SCENE 1

(material drawn from Hearings before the Sub-Committee of the Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives, 76th Congress, Third Session on the Department of Labour-Federal Security Agency-Appropriation Bill for 1941.)

Characters:

MALCOLM C. TARVER, Georgia, Chairman of the Sub-Committee; ALBERT C. ENGEL, Michigan; JOHN M. HOUSTON, Kansas; DR. J. W. STUDEBAKER, Commissioner of the Office of Education; ARCH. A. MERCEY, Assistant Director Film Service; THOMAS ATKINS, Production Manager, Film Service.

MR. TARVER: The next item is salaries and expenses, film service. This also appears to be a new service. There is a proposed appropriation of $106,400 to carry it on . . .

MR. MERCEY: On July 1, 1939, there was approved an expenditure of $168,500 for the completion of two films which were then in production.

MR. TARVER: And you received additional money besides that during the present year?

MR. MERCEY: Yes, we have. We have received under a Work Projects Administration project $162,500.

MR. TARVER: Making a sum total of how much?

MR. MERCEY: $331,000. . .

MR. TARVER: What are you doing with this $331,000? What have you been doing with that this year?

MR. MERCEY: That is for the completion of one feature-length picture called *Fight for Life*—this is the money that will be expended at the end of this fiscal year, June, 1940—and secondly, for the completion of a feature-length film called *Ecce Homo—Behold the Man;* and thirdly, for the carrying on of a very extensive programme of visual education, educational film distribution, educational picture consultation in co-operation with various other departments of the Government.

MR. TARVER: What sort of a picture is this *Fight for Life* that you speak of?

MR. MERCEY: That is a dramatisation of the problem of infant and maternal health and welfare. The Government has spent, that is, private and public agencies, State and National, have spent a good deal of money on the problem of soil erosion. This picture is really a picture on human erosion.

MR. TARVER: About how much will the cost of the film be?

MR. MERCEY: That will be about $150,000.

MR. TARVER: After you complete that film, what are you going to do with it?

MR. MERCEY: After the production is completed, it then becomes a problem of distribution. . . . First of all, the regular professional theatres will be used. . . . Secondly, there will be a great demand on the part of State health agencies, schools, colleges, and all sorts of non-theatrical outlets. There will thus be a double-barrelled outlet for the distribution.

MR. ENGEL: You haven't clipped that garbage-can scene, have you?

MR. MERCEY: We haven't clipped anything from that version that you saw.

MR. TARVER: What other films are you completing?

MR. MERCEY: We are completing three more. One is on rural electrification, which shows the effect and the results of electricity on the American farm. The other film is a film that we are making, called *The Land*, which portrays the vistas of American agriculture. Here is America; here is what we find; here is the land. This is now the frontier of American agriculture, with all of these forests, streams, and pastures; and here is what has happened to it, and here is what is being done to use the land wisely. . .

MR. TARVER: Who is the director of the service?

MR. MERCEY: Pare Lorentz.

MR. TARVER: Why isn't he here to justify this instead of you?

* * * *

MR. MERCEY: He is writing the narration on two of our films. We are trying to get them done as quickly as we can. So he is taking the research material on two of these pictures and he is writing the narration to complete them at the earliest moment.

MR. TARVER: That is more important than getting the money to carry on the work, is it?

MR. MERCEY: I don't like to be put in quite that spot, Mr. Congressman.

MR. TARVER: How many employees do you have?

MR. MERCEY: Sixty-eight, thirty-nine engaged in distribution work and twenty-nine in field production work. Twenty-five of the field production employees are used on a temporary *per diem* basis. That is, they are only used when the extra work requires them.

* * * *

MR. TARVER: May I inquire if you are still paying the director at the rate of $10,000 a year?

MR. MERCEY: That is correct.

MR. TARVER: Are you going to continue to pay

him at that rate until July 1 and then reduce him after July 1 to $7,500.

MR. MERCEY: That seems to be on the schedule.

MR. TARVER: Why not reduce him now instead of waiting until July 1?

MR. MERCEY: If that reduction is made I can say—and this is purely my opinion—that the director that we have would probably sever his connection with the Government; and quite a considerable investment which has been made for service and production would be seriously jeopardised.

MR. TARVER: This director that you have came from what employment?

MR. MERCEY: He was brought down here in 1935 to produce *The Plow that Broke the Plains*. That was in June 1935.

MR. TARVER: What was his employment at that time?

MR. MERCEY: At that time he was a writer on motion pictures for about four or five leading publications, including a syndicate and some magazines. He had been considered for several years an expert in describing and analysing motion-picture technique.

MR. TARVER: What was his salary there?

MR. MERCEY: He was on salary by these magazines. I don't know what his salary was, but it was considerably in excess of what the Government paid him.

MR. TARVER: You have only $331,500 for the present fiscal year, and your estimate here is only $106,400. Do you expect to get some additional money from the W.P.A. for next year?

MR. MERCEY: That remains to be seen. The Budget as now submitted contains no allocation for production expenditures. The programme that you have before you is almost entirely a film-distribution programme. It for the first time establishes a film division as a regular appropriation in the Government framework.

* * * *

MR. HOUSTON: Have you had any complaints from private producers about your being in competition with them?

MR. MERCEY: In 1935 there was some fear that there might be competition with private producers. When *The Plow* was released, that was true. When *The River* was released, that attitude, if any such existed, changed completely . . . they felt that we were filling a certain niche in movie making which no other source filled.

* * * *

MR. ENGEL: Now, this picture, *Fight for Life*—is that the name of it?

MR. MERCEY: That is correct.

MR. ENGEL: That cost somewhere around $178,000, did it?

MR. MERCEY: It cost about $150,000 for the picture; and with that picture is included footage for two additional films which have not been made, but for which footage is available; that is, one on home delivery technique in a Chicago Maternity Centre; and secondly, footage which was taken while this picture was concurrently made on housing problems.

MR. ENGEL: Were those films that you took, showing the bad housing conditions, taken from actual life?

MR. MERCEY: Yes, sir.

MR. ENGEL: Were those people who were walking around actors, or were they people that you just got out there to take their picture?

MR. MERCEY: We employed in the production of that picture seven professional actors, who played the principal parts.

MR. ENGEL: What I mean is, in taking the picture, the people who were walking around those houses back and forth.

MR. MERCEY: Well, many of them.

MR. ENGEL: For instance, you have in that picture a scene of people going to a garbage can and taking out food. Were those people actually going there, or were they actors playing that part?

MR. MERCEY: I will have to ask our production manager, Mr. Atkins.

MR. ATKINS: Those are actual documentary scenes. They were not staged.

MR. ENGEL: They were not staged? The people actually went there and got that food out of the garbage can?

MR. ATKINS: That is true.

MR. ENGEL: I am amazed.

MR. HOUSTON: I have seen that here in Washington in the last eighteen months.

MR. ENGEL: I am amazed to learn that after seven years of the abundant life under the New Deal, we still have people eating out of garbage cans.

* * * *

(Blackout—fast curtain)

SCENE II

(material drawn from the Congressional Record, Proceedings and Debates of the 76th Congress, Third Session: Vol. 86, No. 83. The Senate.)

Characters:

Senators THOMAS of Oklahoma, MCKELLAR of Tennessee, LODGE of Massachusetts, TAFT of Ohio, VANDENBERG of Michigan, BYRNES of South Carolina, ASHURST of Arizona, and voices.

MR. THOMAS: Mr. President, I offer an amendment which I send to the desk and ask to have stated . . . this amendment has to do with the United States Film Service. . . . When the Budget reached the House of Representatives, and the House Committee saw an item carrying $106,000 for the United States Film Service as a specific item, apparently for an independent agency, the committee said: "There is no authority of law for the existence of the United States Film Service." . . . The House, not passing on the merits of the proposal, said: "There is no authority of law for this independent agency. Therefore, we will not allow the appropriation." Mr. President, at this point I desire to place in the Record the authority for this particular item in the Office of Education. I shall place in the Record, if I may have permission to do so, a paragraph from the basic law of the United States Office of Education . . . and I call attention to the last line, which I claim covers this authorisation. After reciting other duties that the Office of Education is authorised to perform, the line is as follows:

and otherwise promote the cause of education throughout the country.

I contend that that language is sufficiently broad to authorise the Office of Education to have this sum appropriated and to use the sum for the distribution of films . . . I ask the distinguished Senator in charge of the bill (MR. MCKELLAR) why this particular item was singled out, and why none of the other 27 or 28 film services has been singled out for annihilation.

MR. MCKELLAR: . . . The Senator asks me why this particular item was singled out. I have been on the Appropriation Committee now for more than twenty years, and this is the first time that an appropriation for film service has ever come to light. Governmental agencies have obtained such appropriations in a clandestine kind of way. I do not mean wrongfully, and perhaps "clandestine" is too strong a word; but, as a matter of fact, money which has been appropriated for work relief has been used for film service and for building up a United States Film Service. Remarkable to tell, we find it in a number of departments. I did not know it was so.

MR. LODGE: Mr. President, I wish to ask the Senator from Tennessee whether it is not true that the relief money which has been used to make films has not resulted in the employment of relief labour in making the films?

MR. MCKELLAR: That is entirely true according to the testimony submitted to committee. I will say to the Senator from Oklahoma that I was absolutely astounded to find that in the Office of Education there had been built up a $409,000 business in the making of films. . . . It struck me as monstrous to be transferring appropriations from one agency to another when there is a prohibition in the W.P.A. law against using the money except for work relief, and yet under the work-relief law they set up a film industry. That is why I say to my distinguished friend from Oklahoma, whom I admire so greatly, that was the first I knew of the establishment of a film industry by the United States, though I have long suspected it, because I am a great moving-picture goer, I am very fond of the moving pictures; I spend a good deal of time, very profitably and certainly very delightfully, at the moving-picture shows. But I am not in favour of the United States Government building up a moving-picture industry.

* * * *

MR. THOMAS: Mr. President, there is no illusion about this matter. It is nothing new. It is at least twenty-five years old. Each bill carries funds available for the dissemination of information. The Congress does not give the departments specific instructions as to how that information shall be disseminated. The Congress does not say that information shall be disseminated by postal card, or by letter, or by handbills, or by way of any other particular

(continued on p. 53)

SELWYN FILMS LTD.

DOCUMENTARY FILM PRODUCERS

TELEPHONE: WESTERN 4969

19, LEXHAM MEWS
LONDON, W.8

WORLD'S PRESS NEWS

and Documentary

WORLD'S PRESS NEWS is already established as an authoritative guide on Documentary Films. Its crisp, forceful articles by experts are accepted as authoritative by advertising executives who realize the major place Documentary Films are taking in the world of advertising.

Big business men read WORLD'S PRESS NEWS and appreciate the extra service afforded to them by the regular "Big Screen" editorials and Film supplements.

A special section devoted to Documentary and Advertising films will be published in "Advertising World" at the end of March and will be included in WORLD'S PRESS NEWS, March 27th issue, as a supplement.

WORLD'S PRESS NEWS, 112 FETTER LANE, FLEET STREET, LONDON. TELEPHONE: CHA. 8899. TELEGRAMS: COSMOPRES, LONDON

ADVERTISEMENT MANAGER C. CARLTON COLLINS

SIGHT & SOUND

Rationalisation or Nationalisation

method. That is left to the discretion of the Department.

MR. TAFT: Mr. President——

MR. THOMAS: I yield.

MR. TAFT: I can understand how the Department of Agriculture might send out films showing how to control insects, or something of that sort.

MR. THOMAS: I shall come to that in a moment.

MR. TAFT: But what possible function has the Office of Education in sending out films? These films have no relation to education.

* * * *

MR. VANDENBERG: What is the purpose of these films and their distribution? Is it to popularise the work of the various bureaux, so that they in turn may build up a popular appeal to expand their functions, and get more money with which to operate?

* * * *

MR. THOMAS: Mr. President, unless the Government maintains some agency or agencies to disseminate information about what the Government is doing, the people will soon be placed in darkness, where they will remain until some future Congress provides the funds to continue this educational programme. It may be that some of the activities of the Government should remain in the dark: I will not discuss that proposition, but the good things that are being done should be made public . . .

* * * *

MR. TAFT: Mr. President, I do not know about the use of films in many of the departments, I cannot say that they are not useful. I should think it might be somewhat questionable whether a film showing the general method of getting rid of rats . . . is the best way to teach people to get rid of rats. I should think there might be much more effective methods and that, perhaps, it would be a waste of money to send films of that kind around the country. . . . In so far as films are used simply for general education to provide moving pictures for everybody, I think it is far beyond the functions of the Federal Government, and it is particularly dangerous when films are produced which only in a general way illustrate functions of the Federal Government. I do not care who is controlling the Government, if it is to produce films and put them out, they are bound to become propaganda for the particular department and the particular work of the department that happens to be covered by the film . . . If the Republicans were given power, it would be used to advance particular measures in which they might be interested. It is true, certainly, also of the present administration. . . .

In other words, a United States documentary film is a United States propaganda film. I do not care how good the purpose of that kind of film may be, I do not believe it is an undertaking in which the Federal Government should engage. . . . This whole business of film service and radio service for the Government not only has been used for purposes of propaganda, but it is bound to be so used. I believe that when we have a chance to vote on it—and this is the first chance we have had to vote on this kind of thing—we ought to say to the bureaux of the Government that the time has come when they should attend to their particular business, and they should not be out spreading propaganda. We should not provide money to stir up our constituents to come and lobby with us to do the things which we ought to do without any lobbying and without any propaganda.

MR. MCKELLAR: Mr. President, I am very anxious to have a vote on this amendment; and I shall take only a moment or two to state to the Senate what the proposal is.

1. To study Government motion-picture activities with a view to making recommendations for improvement of quality of product and methods of distribution.

I doubt the efficacy of that, and I cannot see any reason for it.

2. To compile, from the best Government products, a film library under topical organisation which would be of great value to educational institutions.

I imagine they already have that. Why set up this establishment for that purpose?

3. To continue distribution of the documentary films, *The Plow that Broke the Plains*, and *The River*.

Those two films have been seen by the entire country, and I doubt whether there is any reason for continuing their distribution.

4. To operate a relay system of servicing schools with all films through the National Emergency Council as central clearing-house.

I see no reason for that.

5. To provide a central information office on all Government film activities.

This is the first time films were ever known to be made of governmental activities. No money was ever appropriated for that purpose. Such moneys as have been used for it were secretly used under appropriations made for other purposes. The money appropriated for those purposes was transferred to the film industry.

6. To provide publications and study aids to schools and colleges, which would improve the usefulness of Government films.

"Of Government films!"

7. To act as a service agency for the production of high quality documentary films comparable to *The Plow the Broke the Plains* and *The River*.

8. To act as consultant to all Federal agencies on matters of production and distribution for purposes of improving movie activities.

9. To act as a liaison between the Federal Government and the theatrical motion-picture industry.

Mr. President, I very much doubt whether there is constitutional authority for those things. . . .

MR. ASHURST: Mr. President, the one attitude I desire not to occupy would be one that might be construed as other than friendly to motion or sound pictures. I am of the opinion that the drama is the dearest to the people of all the arts save music.

MR. MCKELLAR: Mr. President, may I interrupt the Senator?

MR. ASHURST: Certainly.

MR. MCKELLAR: I do not want to be put in that attitude, either, because the Senator knows that I am one of the most consistent and regular attendants on the moving pictures of this city and of my home city. I know the Senator from Arizona feels the same way about the matter, because I frequently meet him at moving picture theatres.

MR. ASHURST: The able Senator from Tennessee is, as usual, correct. As I was about to say, the drama is coextensive with the people; and of all the arts save music, it is probably the dearest to the human race. The stage is akin to poetry in that it is a great expression of human emotion. The stage is a vision of the romance inseparable from every human life; it is a magical place, breathing the inspiration of colour and sound; a place for high thoughts, splendid truths and beautiful words, and objects vividly observed and gorgeously imagined. The Senator from Tennessee and I are probably the Senate's greatest movie "fans". I will say in passing that it requires courage to take the position which is taken by the Senator from Tennessee on measures looking toward appropriations; but I arose to talk about the subject as presented in another phase.

(The following half-hour of Senator Ashurst's fine declamatory style was not relevant to the Film Service, being a voicing of the film industry's protest to the permission and charge required to film on Federal properties.)

MR. LODGE: In my judgment the reasons for radio programmes and film programmes fall into two categories. Either they are under the heading of entertainment or they are under the heading of education. I do not believe any Senator will support the contention that it is the business of the Government to go into the field of entertainment. So far as education is concerned, I heartily agree with the Senator from Tennessee that that is a matter which ought to be done directly. If the Government of the United States is going to put out a propaganda film endeavouring to show that the Republicans are good and the Democrats are bad, or *vice versa*, it ought to be done subject to a considered and deliberated and matured policy. . . . I personally have great doubt of the wisdom of placing the Government in the educational field at all, but certainly if we do place it in that field we ought to do so with our eyes open.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER: The question is on agreeing to the amendment of the Senator from Oklahoma (MR. THOMAS).

* * * *

The result was announced—yeas 24, nays 36, not voting 36.

So the amendment of MR. THOMAS of Oklahoma was rejected.

(*Slow curtain*)

RELIGION AND THE SCREEN

By ANDREW BUCHANAN

THE WORLD is crammed with critics because, as some venerable person once said, criticism is easy, and art is difficult. He might have added that religion is the most difficult of all, since men took it over from God. Now, there is nothing quite so seemingly vulnerable nor inviting to a critic as religion, and when film becomes entangled with it, anything may happen—and often does. The safest thing to do, of course, is to leave it well alone, and the next safest, to write about it so ambiguously that one's fiercest opponents agree with every word. As, however, that would get us no further than we were before the war, wherever that was, and as there's a paper shortage, it would be better to tackle the subject at its roots, and attempt to visualise the shape of religion to come in the great new future which is going to descend upon us when peace breaks out; a future more noble, more magnificent, than any past future ever attempted to be. Incidentally, whether wholesale destruction is quite the best soil in which to plant seeds from which to expect New World Order blooms I cannot say, for I am no haughty culturist. I imagine even Mr. Middleton would find it a vexing problem, for he knows one cannot go by the picture on the packet, and when there isn't even a picture. . . .

Obviously, the first task is for us to find out exactly what is meant by religion, and, insofar as the screen is concerned, whether we hope for, or expect, an increase in religious films after the war, and what we mean by religious films. Do they emanate solely from the various denominations which find it difficult to agree with each other? It would seem that both the world's religions and the variations of specific religions which have persisted in the past must be superseded by *something* capable of guiding humanity in an entirely new direction. This something needs to be a religion which transcends sects—which is a unification of all conflicting and confusing denominations—a simplification dealing in fundamentals which will inspire men, and make them realise that their first duty is towards God, and not to governments. Consequently, it must be a religion that does not reach us as an adaptation containing little trace of the original from which it was adapted. It must be as imperative in the future as one's ration book is now. If it isn't, it will be of no use, save to cloak the misdeeds of men with righteousness, and that kind of thing has gone on too long, and got religion into rather bad odour.

Religion should, I suggest, have everything to do with everything. That being so, anything unconnected with it must be in urgent need of repair. It should influence every form of government—national and international—instead of being governed by political dieties. In other words, religion should cease to be a thing apart from daily life which functions on Sundays, and during periods of particularly grave crises, and represented by the visible symbols of churches. Of course, to expect a unification of denominations—a religion which places God before nations—is, in the opinion of many, to expect the impossible. But to expect a *new* world order based on the *old* world order of religions is even more impossible. What then? Well, nothing is impossible that is worth achieving, but we cannot begin until the decks have been thoroughly cleared for action of quite a different kind. It will be seen, therefore, that merely to talk of religious films without finding out what they are, or are not, can only add to the confusion. First, a religion acceptable to mankind should be agreed upon, and here I would make a suggestion, which, at first glance, may not seem very original. It is that we should look to Christianity to supply our vital needs. There is only one condition—it *must* be Christianity as taught by Christ, which, I venture to suggest, has not been given a trial. Parallel with the Western world is the East, and before it went west, so to speak, it lived in accordance with very similar maxims taught by Buddha and Confucius. When civilisation stepped in—or, should we say, flew in—everything went to pieces—and now look at them, or us, or both. The basic point is that the right design for living has been available to *all* human beings, all the time. God saw to that. And if only we looked beyond the denominations, the barriers, and the pathetically patriotic pomp which has distracted us from simple truths, we should be able to discern the kind of religion we are searching for—indeed, the kind without which there can be no future.

Now for film, which exerts a great influence, and, therefore, is going to be a contributory factor to progress, one way or the other, in the years to come. If we insist on talking about "religious films" we are going to perpetuate the conventional illusion that religion is distinct from everything else, and that all other films either lack religion, or are definitely irreligious, which is nonsense. "Religious films" of the kind which immediately infer pictorial interpretations of Biblical stories set in Old Palestine are inadequate. That should go without saying, though, in the past, it didn't. Such films, admirable for the limited purpose of circulating to church audiences, tend to confine religion instead of setting it free, for the influence of the spiritual factor is needed where it least exists—far beyond the walls of the church—in everyday life—in the cinema. As, however, every cinema audience is representative of all denominations, films containing "messages" from any particular Church could not be completely acceptable, particularly as any such films would almost certainly look religious. It cannot, therefore, be from recognised religious sources that we should expect the kind of films most needed in the future, but from *within* the industry. We seem to be arriving somewhere. The industry has a great responsibility towards the public—a responsibility which is by no means fulfilled by the supplying of entertainment and news, for the entertainment and the news need to be shaped in accordance with the proposed finer future.

That will involve prohibiting (or preferably the creating of a disinclination to continue making) all those films which feed on the old world order, and encouraging others which shall express an infinitely wider and more progressive viewpoint.

It will be hard on those who have found good box-office material in the figure of hate, and similar sinister shapes, for they will have to change their spectacles to enable them to see round corners which don't really exist. Actually, it is work which should begin now, but, as far as I can make out, vague ideas seem to exist that only after an armistice has been signed should our

STANLEY IRVING.

Director of Short Subjects

Recently completed script commissioned by M.O.I.

23 PEMBRIDGE SQ.
LONDON, W.2

BAYswater 1461 or
Maidenhead 1848

very dormant spiritual natures become evident, and begin doing their creative jobs, and that they are safer under lock and key during a war. That may be so, but in wars, so many keys get lost that when the moment of liberation comes, they cannot be found, and, not infrequently, the poor spiritual factors remain prisoners for life—or death. And, because of jubilations, their absence is rarely noticed, and peace is indulged in by people who seem remarkably similar, if not identical, to those so active during the war. That's the trouble, of course—becoming visionary and bursting with reconstruction to order—waiting for Radio Romeo to tell us it's time for a New Order.

No, I don't think we've wandered from the point, which is to make the screen worthy of a finer future by beginning to shape it now. With religious films? Certainly, but let us forget the term, and think only of films permeated with essential invisible qualities. When Mr. Deeds went to town, and Mr. Smith went to Washington, both appeared in religious films, but no one knew—at least, very few. And when the Blue Bird flew across the screen, it presented religion in glorious Technicolour extremely successfully, for it was concerned with fundamentals, and designed to awaken the same response in the peoples of *all* nations. There, it seems, is the secret—something to thread races together, instead of keeping them apart. Naturally, it's a big task, for not only have nations become divided, but the people within each one have got into dreadful denominational muddles—and yet there has been plenty of evidence in the past that these superficial conflicts can be instantly swept aside if the right button is pressed, because then, in a moment, all the peoples of all the nations form themselves into the most wonderful thing on earth—Humanity—which knows it is responsible to one God. Fundamentally, therefore, what we are looking for is a voice which can speak for Humanity and to Humanity as a whole. Yes, it's a big task, but it need not be so colossal as running this war, providing, of course, everyone would be prepared to devote the same maximum amount of energy to establishing peace, as has been devoted to destroying it. But the nations will not be aided by religions as we know them to-day, but by religion as I hope we shall know it to-morrow. Making the kind of films I have suggested also involves knowing the kind of films to avoid making, which, of course, reverts back to the film-makers of all countries, and perhaps particularly to those responsible for newsreels, for screen journalism of the future will have to be so very different. Have we not already glimpsed the shape it may take in recent documentary productions? Anyhow, film-makers will need to alter their viewpoint, or be given the opportunity to express their better judgment. Whichever it is, the screen awaits them, knowing that entertainment values will not be diminished one iota by the inclusion of the essential qualities, and the exclusion of all those things which have helped to create the present disorder.

A pretty dream maybe, but preferable to the nightmare which reality has become. I think it was Swift who wrote, "We have just enough religion to make us hate, but not enough to make us love one another." An awkward sort of truth.

Now, as nations always prepare for war in peace-time, surely it would be permissible for them to prepare for peace in war-time, otherwise it's difficult to know when to fit the job in. My own opinion is that all the negative material surrounding us should be transformed into positive values immediately.

CHAPLIN'S SPEECH

In response to a number of requests from D.N.L. readers we publish the full text of Chaplin's concluding speech in "The Great Dictator".

"I'm sorry, but I don't want to be an emperor. That's not my business. I don't want to rule or conquer anyone. I should like to help everyone—if possible—Jew, Gentile—black man—white.

"We all want to help one another. Human beings are like that. We want to live by each other's happiness—not by each other's misery. We don't want to hate and despise one another.

"In this world there is room for everyone. And the good earth is rich and can provide for everyone.

"The way of life can be free and beautiful, but we have lost the way. Greed has poisoned men's souls—has barricaded the world with hate—has goosestepped us into misery and bloodshed.

"We have developed speed, but we have shut ourselves in. Machinery that gives abundance has left us in want. Our knowledge has made us cynical. Our cleverness, hard and unkind.

"We think too much and feel too little. More than machinery we need humanity. More than cleverness we need kindness and gentleness. Without these qualities, life will be violent and all will be lost. . . .

"The aeroplane and the radio have brought us closer together. The very nature of these inventions cries out for the goodness in man—cries out for universal brotherhood—for the unity of us all.

"Even now my voice is reaching millions throughout the world—millions of despairing men, women and little children—victims of a system that makes men torture and imprison innocent people.

"To those who can hear me, I say—do not despair. The misery that has come upon us is but the passing of greed—the bitterness of men who fear the way of human progress.

"The hate of men will pass, and dictators die, and the power they took from the people will return to the people. And so long as men die, liberty will never perish.

"Soldiers! Don't give yourselves to these brutes—men who despise you—enslave you—regiment your lives—tell you what to do—what to think and what to feel! Who drill you—diet you—treat you like cattle and use you as cannon fodder.

"Don't give yourself to these unnatural men—machine men with machine minds and machine hearts!

"You have the love of humanity in your hearts!—don't hate! Only the unloved hate—the unloved and the unnatural! Soldiers! Don't fight for slavery! Fight for liberty!

"In the 17th Chapter of St. Luke, it is written: 'The Kingdom of God is within you,' not in one man nor a group of men, but in all men! In you! You, the people, have the power—the power to create machines. The power to create happiness!

"You, the people, have the power to make this life free and beautiful—to make this life a wonderful adventure.

"Then—in the name of democracy—let us use that power—let us all unite.

"Let us fight for a new world—a decent world that will give men a chance to work—that will give youth a future and old age security.

"By the promise of these things, brutes have risen to power. But they lied! They do not fulfil that promise. They never will! Dictators freed themselves but they enslaved the people!

"Now let us fight to fulfil that promise! Let us fight to free the world—to do away with national barriers—to do away with greed, with hate and intolerance.

"Let us fight for a world of reason—a world where science, where progress, will lead to the happiness of us all. Soldiers! In the name of democracy, let us unite!

"Can you hear me? Wherever you are, look up! Look up! The clouds are lifting! The sun is breaking through!

"We are coming out of the darkness into the light! We are coming into a new world—a kindlier world, where men will rise above their greed, their hate and their brutality.

"Look up! The soul of man has been given wings and at last he is beginning to fly. He is flying into the rainbow—into the light of hope—into the future—the glorious future that belongs to you—to me—and to all of us! Look up! Look up!"

DOCUMENTARY AND OTHER BOOKINGS FOR MARCH

(The following bookings for March are selected from a list covering its Members, supplied by The News and Specialised Theatres Association)

	Week ending
Animals in Wonderland News Cinema, Aberdeen	29th
An Unrecorded Victory The News Theatre, Leeds	22nd
Atlantic The Cosmo Cinema, Glasgow	1st
Blue Grass Tatler News Reel Theatre, Newcastle	22nd
Bone Trouble The Cosmo Cinema, Glasgow	15th
Britain's Youth Tatler News Reel Theatre, Newcastle	1st
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	29th
City of Ships The News House, Nottingham	8th
Creatures Great and Small The News House, Nottingham	22nd
Deep End Tatler News Theatre, Newcastle	1st
Diving Demons The News Theatre, Leeds	8th
Faithful for Ever Tatler News Reel Theatre, Newcastle	8th
Fear and Peter Brown The News House, Nottingham	1st
Flying Targets (Sport) News Cinema, Aberdeen	1st
The News Theatre, Leeds	22nd
Flying to Australia The News House, Nottingham	29th
Going Places No. 4 News Cinema, Aberdeen	1st
Going Places, No. 75 News Cinema, Aberdeen	22nd
Going Places, No. 81 Tatler News Reel Theatre, Newcastle	1st
Going Places, No. 82 Tatler News Reel Theatre, Newcastle	15th
Going Places, No. 83 Tatler News Reel Theatre, Newcastle	29th
Hidden Kingdom The News Theatre, Leeds	8th
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	15th
Home Movies The Cosmo Cinema, Glasgow	1st
House Painter (Secrets of Life) News Cinema, Aberdeen	1st

	Week ending
How to Eat The News House, Nottingham	15th
Hurdle Hoppers The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	15th
Indian Durbar Tatler News Reel Theatre, Newcastle	22nd
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	29th
Inland Port The News Theatre, Leeds	15th
Into the Blue The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	22nd
Jay Allai The News Theatre, Leeds	1st
Jungle The Tatler Theatre, Chester	15th
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	1st
Jungle The News Theatre, Leeds	1st
Kennel Kings Tatler News Reel Theatre, Newcastle	8th
King of Spades The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	29th
Lets Talk Turkey The News Theatre, Leeds	15th
March of Time, No. 8 The Cosmo Cinema, Glasgow	29th
March of Time, No. 9—Mexico The Cosmo Cinema, Glasgow	8th
The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	8th
News Cinema, Aberdeen	15th
The News House, Nottingham	15th
Nomad in the North News Cinema, Aberdeen	8th
Non Quassi The Tatler Theatre, Chester	15th
On the Table Tatler News Reel Theatre, Newcastle	8th
Pleasure Bound in Canada The News Theatre, Leeds	29th
Point of View, No. 8 The Tatler Theatre, Chester	8th
Pow-Wow Tatler News Reel Theatre, Newcastle	1st
Zoo Pigmies and Andy Panda Tatler News Reel Theatre, Newcastle	8th
Scottish Symphony Tatler News Reel Theatre, Newcastle	15th

	Week ending
Sea Scouts Tatler News Reel Theatre, Newcastle	22nd
Smart Footwork News Cinema, Aberdeen	29th
The Romance of the Potato The News Theatre, Leeds	29th
Story of Dr Jenner The Cosmo Cinema, Glasgow	1st
Tell Me If It Hurts News Cinema, Aberdeen	8th
The Beat of the Drum Tatler News Reel Theatre, Newcastle	29th
The Bookworm The Cosmo Cinema, Glasgow	1st
The British Navy News Cinema, Aberdeen	29th
The Egg Hunt Tatler News Reel Theatre, Newcastle	1st
The Fair River The Cosmo Cinema, Glasgow	29th
The Hockey Champ Tatler News Reel Theatre, Newcastle	1st
The New Britain The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	1st
The Pharmacist The Tatler Theatre, Chester	29th
The Practical Pig Tatler News Reel Theatre, Newcastle	8th
The Worm Turns The News Theatre, Leeds	8th
This is Poland The Tatler Theatre, Chester	22nd
The News Theatre, Leeds	15th
This is Poland—Forgotten Victory The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	22nd
Under the Water The News Cinema, Aberdeen	15th
Washington Parade, No. 8 The News Cinema, Aberdeen	22nd
Washington Parade, No. 10 The Tatler News Reel Theatre, Newcastle	22nd
Window Cleaners The Tatler News Reel Theatre, Newcastle	29th
Young America Flies The Tatler Theatre, Manchester	1st
Young Animals The News Theatre, Nottingham	8th

WORLD FILM NEWS

A Limited Number of Bound Volumes for Sale

Volume 1	£2 0 0
Volume 2	£1 10 0
Volume 3	£1 0 0

Single Copies

Volume 1	3/6
Volume 2	2/6
Volume 3	2/-

(Issues No. 2 of Volume 1 and No. 6 of Volume 2 are no longer available.)

Obtainable from

FILM CENTRE, 34 SOHO SQUARE, W.1

BACK NUMBERS

Volume 1 of DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

is practically sold out and several issues are now out of print.

In order to comply with requests for complete volumes we shall be glad to hear from anyone who is willing to sell any of the following issues:—

Volume I. Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4 and 9

Please send back numbers to:

DNL, 34 SOHO SQUARE, LONDON, W.1

FILM SOCIETY NEWS

Ayrshire Film Society showed three well-worthwhile revivals on February 9th—*The Gay Desperado*, *The River* and *Champion Charlie*. The Shell Unit's *Distillation* film was also run. The show on February 23rd was a Sino-Japanese programme, including Pabst's *Drame de Shanghai* and a March of Time item. On March 9th the feature will be *Accord Finale* with a supporting programme of shorts to be announced later.

The **Manchester and District Film Institute Society,** while justly and sternly rebuking D.N.L. for confusing it with its Merseyside cousin, announces that after a very successful autumn season a further session is in progress with membership up to full capacity. *La Femme du Boulanger* ("an ideal film society film" adds the Secretary) and *Quai des Brumes* have already been shown.

Dundee and St. Andrews looks with satisfaction on its record for the present season—ten shows and a membership of 676. It is doubtful if any other society can better these figures. The carefully selected programme of gramophone records which are detailed in each of the programmes for performance prior to each of the shows has been a source of much interest to members, who have commented upon it very favourably, especially in a winter when there has been no opportunity of hearing any music publicly performed.

The newly formed **Glasgow Scientific Film Society** is now in full swing. Programmes for January and February included *Mediaeval Village*, *The Fern*, *The Red Army*, *Compression Ignition Engine*, *Enough to Eat*, *Vitamins*, and *The Sparrow Hawk*. In the near future the Society proposes to form an experimental group. Also an Amateur Film Night is planned for March 5th; on this occasion scientists and others will show films made by themselves.

Tyneside reports that membership is round about the 600 mark. Programmes have been kept fairly short, in order to beat the blackout. The February programme consisted of Mary Field's *Atlantic* and Feyder's *Gens du Voyage*. Future programmes will include Clair's *Quartorze Juillet*, Alexandrov's *Circus*, and probably a recent Guitry film.

The **Edinburgh Film Guild** gave a special Polish programme on February 23rd. *This is Poland* was shown, and the director of the Film, Eugeniusz Cekalski, gave an address.

The **Belfast Society** battles boldly on, in spite of many difficulties. The third show was Feher's *Robber Symphony* which unexpectedly arrived in a 13 reel version—thus causing the programme to over-run by an hour. The next show is to be *Katia*, supported by various shorts. With membership at 400 the Society finds itself working on a very narrow financial margin, but is determined to "carry on as long as we have a penny of balance". Four more numbers of the Film Review are planned.

Stoke-on-Trent Secondary School Film Society. The Secretaries report:—"A Society composed of school children is affected to a greater extent by war conditions than an adult society. Subject, as its personnel is, to school discipline and parental control, a convenient meeting time is difficult to arrange. The time fixed for recent shows (5 p.m.) has militated against a large attendance. The Society is still however very much alive and continues its monthly meetings. In January we sampled the M.O.I. Road Show services with its (then) arbitrary choice of programme. Audience reaction was most favourable perhaps to *Men of the Lightship* (although seen before by almost every member) and *The Front Line*. This month (February) *Owd Bob* was very well received as were also extracts from two early silent Chaplins. Next month we are projecting an M.O.I. programme of our own choice with special reference to Air activities, to which the Air Training Corps will be invited."

The London Scientific Film Society gave its first performance of the season at the Polytechnic Theatre in Regent Street on 8th February, when an appreciative audience saw a programme on the history and developments of aviation.

For the second performance, on 1st March (which will have taken place by the time these notes appear) a particularly interesting theme was chosen—a study of the film as an instrument for use in education, especially scientific education. It is to be doubted whether many teachers realise the immense capabilities of the screen as a classroom adjunct, in bringing home impressions of human activity in every corner of the world, in speeding up or slowing down motion of all kinds and, by animated diagrams, showing what happens inside the "works"; and certainly, judging by results, most scientists have little understanding of the value of the cine camera in experiment and record. Even people with some knowledge of the film in science and education must have found many new ideas and possibilities arising from this performance.

The **Scottish Churches Film Guild** reports that the Glasgow branch continues the reviewing of religious films. At the meeting in February the two films, *A Prodigal Son* and *As We Forgive* were reviewed. A special meeting was also held during February when a panel consisting of delegates from the various temperance societies in the city and which are associated with the Churches joined with the members of the Committee in reviewing Temperance films.

The **Scottish Educational Film Association** reports that despite the unavoidable restrictions of wartime regulations, routine Branch Meetings are continuing in practically every area. The Glasgow Branch, with the generous co-operation of the management of the Cosmo Cinema, organised matinées for teachers at which were shown films of interest and merit but of the type not usually included in the ordinary cinema programme. This idea was further developed by the Cosmo where a series of such matinées was run during January on Saturday forenoons.

FOR PRECISION PROCESSING
WITH A PROMPT SERVICE

WE ARE COMPREHENSIVELY EQUIPPED TO CARRY OUT EVERY REQUIREMENT THAT CAN BE USEFULLY PROVIDED BY A MODERN LABORATORY—AUTOMATIC DEVELOPING AND PRINTING—FINE GRAIN DUPING—OPTICAL EFFECTS MIXES AND WIPES—TITLES—ANIMATED DIAGRAMS—SPECIAL TRAILERS AND INSERTS

TELEPHONE GERRARD 1365-6

STUDIO FILM LABORATORIES LTD.

80-82 WARDOUR ST., & 71 DEAN ST., W.1

REVIEW YOUR FILMS AT OUR PREVIEW RCA THEATRE

UP-TO-DATE PRIVATE CUTTING ROOMS AVAILABLE FOR HIRE

FILM LIBRARIES

Borrowers of films are asked to apply as much in advance as possible, to give alternative booking dates, and to return the films immediately after use. H. A hire charge is made. F. Free distribution. Sd. Sound. St. Silent.

Association of Scientific Workers, 30 Bedford Row, W.C.1. Scientific Film Committee. *Graded List of Films.* A list of scientific films from many sources, classified and graded for various types of audience. On request, Committee will give advice on programme make-up and choice of films.

Austin Film Library. 24 films of motoring interest, industrial, technical and travel. Available only from the *Educational Films Bureau*, Tring, Herts. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

Australian Trade Publicity Film Library. 18 films of Australian life and scenery. Available from the *Empire Film Library*. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F. 3, sound films on 9.5 mm. available from *Pathescope*.

British Commercial Gas Association, Gas Industry House, 1 Grosvenor Place, S.W.1. Films on social subjects, domestic science, manufacture of gas. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & a few St. F.

British Council Film Department, 25 Saville Row, W.1. *Films of Britain*, 1940. Catalogue for overseas use only but provides useful synopses of 100 sound and silent documentary films.

British Film Institute, 4 Great Russell Street, W.C.1. (*a*) *National Film Library*. An important collection of documentary and other films. Available only to full members of B.F.I. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. H. (*b*) *Some British and Foreign Documentary and other Short Films*. A general list of films and sources. (*c*) *Early Films*. Films 1896–1934 still available in Britain.

British Instructional Films, 111 Wardour Street, W.1. Feature films; Pathé Gazettes and Pathetones; a good collection of nature films. A new catalogue is in preparation. 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

Canadian Pacific Film Library. 15 films of Canadian life and scenery. Available from the *Empire Film Library*. 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

Canadian Government Exhibitions and Publicity. A wide variety of films. Available from the *Empire Film Library*.

Central Film Library, Imperial Institute, S.W.7. Has absorbed the *Empire Film Library* and the *G.P.O. Film Library*. Also contains all new M.O.I. non-theatrical films. No general catalogue yet issued. A hand list of M.O.I. films is available. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

Coal Utilisation Joint Council, General Buildings, Aldwych, London, W.C.2. Films on production of British coal and miners' welfare. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. F.

Crookes' Laboratories, Gorst Road, Park Royal, N.W.10. *Colloids in Medicine*. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. F.

Dartington Hall Film Unit, Totnes, South Devon. Classroom films on regional and economic geography. 16 mm. St. H.

Dominion of New Zealand Film Library. 415 Strand, W.C.2. 22 films of industry, scenery and sport. Includes several films about the Maoris. 16 mm. St. F.

Educational Films Bureau, Tring, Herts. A selection of all types of film. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

Educational General Services, 37 Golden Square, W.1. A wide selection of films, particularly of overseas interest. Some prints for sale. 16 mm. & St. H.

Electrical Development Association, 2 Savoy Hill, Strand, W.C.2. Four films of electrical interest. Further films of direct advertising appeal are available to members of the Association only. 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

Empire Film Library. Films primarily of Empire interest, with a useful subject index. Now merged with the *Central Film Library*. 16 mm. and a few 35 mm. Sd. & St. F.

Film Centre, 34 Soho Square, W.1. *Mouvements Vibratoires*. A film on simple harmonic motion. French captions. 35 mm. & 16 mm. St. H.

Ford Film Library, Dagenham, Essex. Some 50 films of travel, engineering, scientific and comedy interest. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

Gaumont-British Equipments, Film House, Wardour Street, W.1. Many films on scientific subjects, geography, hygiene, history, language, natural history, sport. Also feature films. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

G.P.O. Film Library. Over 100 films, mostly centred round communications. Now merged with the *Central Film Library*. 35 mm., 16mm. Sd. & St. F.

Kodak, Ltd., Kingsway, W.C.2. (*a*) *Kodascope Library*. Instructional, documentary, feature, western, comedy. Strong on early American comedies. 16 mm. & 8 mm. St. H. (A separate *List of Educational Films*, extracted from the above, is also published. A number of films have teaching notes.) (*b*) *Medical Film Library*. Circulation restricted to members of medical profession. Some colour films. Some prints for outright sale. 16 mm. St. H.

March of Time, Dean House, 4 Dean Street, W.1. Selected *March of Time* items, including *Inside Nazi Germany*, *Battle Fleets of Britain*, *Canada at War*. 16 mm. Sd. H.

Mathematical Films. Available from B. G. D. Salt, 5 Carlingford Road, Hampstead, N.W.3. Five mathematical films suitable for senior classes. 16 mm. & 9.5 mm. St. H.

Metropolitan-Vickers Electrical Co., Ltd., Trafford Park, Manchester 17. *Planned Electrification*, a film on the electrification of the winding and surface gear in a coal mine. Available for showing to technical and educational groups. 16 mm. Sd. F.

Ministry of Food Film Library, Neville House, Page Street, S.W,1, or from District Officers. 23 films mostly on cooking, nutrition and kindred subjects. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

Pathescope, North Circular Road, Cricklewood, N.W.2. Wide selection of silent films, including cartoons, comedies, drama, documentary, travel, sport. Also good selection of early American and German films. 9.5 mm. Sd. & St. H.

Petroleum Films Bureau, 15 Hay Hill, Berkeley Square, W.1. Some 25 technical and documentary films. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

Religious Film Library, Church Walk, Dunstable, Beds. Films of religious and temperance appeal. Also list of supporting films from other sources. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

Scottish Central Film Library, 2 Newton Place, Charing Cross, Glasgow, C.3. A wide selection of teaching films from many sources. Contains some silent Scots films not listed elsewhere. Library available to groups in Scotland only. 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

Sound-Film Services, 27 Charles Street, Cardiff. Library of selected films including Massingham's *And So to Work*. *Rome* and *Sahara* have French commentaries. 16 mm. Sd. H.

South African Railways Publicity and Travel Bureau, South Africa House, Trafalgar Square, W.C.2. 10 films of travel and general interest. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & 4 St. versions. F.

Southern Railway, General Manager's Office, Waterloo Station, S.E.1. Seven films (one in colour) including *Building an Electric Coach*, *South African Fruit* (Southampton Docks to Covent Garden), and films on seaside towns. 16 mm. St. F.

Wallace Heaton, Ltd., 127 New Bond Street, W.1. Three catalogues. Sound 16 mm., silent 16 mm., silent 9.5 mm. Sound catalogue contains number of American feature films, including *Thunder Over Mexico*, and some shorts. Silent 16 mm. catalogue contains first-class list of early American, German and Russian features and shorts, 9.5 catalogue has number of early German films and wide selection of early American and English slapstick comedies. 16 mm. & 9.5 mm. Sd. & St. H.

Workers' Film Association, 145 Wardour Street, W1. Films of democratic and co-operative interest. Notes and suggestions for complete programmes. Some prints for sale. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

ROTHA FILMS

A NEW UNIT IN DOCUMENTARY

STATES ITS POLICY

In the Preface to his new book, Professor Julian Huxley writes:

> **"The most vital task of the present age is to formulate a social basis for civilization, to dethrone economic ideals and replace them by human ones."**

We subscribe to this statement; and we believe that the medium of the film should be used to spread the knowledge needed by all who plan for the post-war world.

In the fields of education, health, medicine, housing and the social sciences, important developments are happening which will greatly influence reconstruction.

We believe that today it is the responsibility of documentary film-makers to produce films and conduct research about those aspects of our life from which will come social changes in the future.

DONALD ALEXANDER PAUL ROTHA JOHN PAGE BLADON PEAKE

CARL MAYER, Scenario Adviser

Associated with the Unit are several documentary film-makers, now either serving in the Armed Forces or working on film production in the Dominions, who support its policy.

PAUL ROTHA PRODUCTIONS LTD

26-27 D'ARBLAY STREET WARDOUR STREET LONDON W1 GERRARD 2826

TWO NEW **STRAND** *SHORTS*

FOR THEATRICAL DISTRIBUTION

"WAR FRONT"

BRITAIN'S NEWS PHOTOGRAPHERS IN WAR-TIME

FEATURING

BRUCE BELFRAGE

"THE SERVING ARMY"

THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE SALVATION ARMY IN LONDON'S WORST "BLITZED" AREAS

THE STRAND FILM COMPANY LTD.

DONALD TAYLOR, MANAGING DIRECTOR.

5a UPPER ST. MARTIN'S LANE, W.C.2. Merton Park Studios: 269 KINGSTON ROAD, S.W.9

Owned and published by Film Centre Ltd., 34 Soho Square, London, W.1, and printed by Simson Shand Ltd., the Shenval Press, London and Hertford